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ABSTRACT

A longitudinal study examined the correlation between child abuse and neglect and subsequent ungovernable or delinquent behavior in 6428 children reported to court or child protective agencies in eight N.Y. counties during either 1952-3 or 1971-2. Histories of 4465 children from the earlier study were followed through court records for later delinquency, ungovernability, abuse, or neglect; while histories of the 1963 delinquent or ungovernable children from the second group were reviewed for previous instances of child abuse or neglect. Among eleven findings were that children reported as abused, neglected, delinquent, or ungovernable come from similar families, which differ significantly from the general population; that few services were provided to abused or neglected children or their families; that previously abused delinquent children tended to be more violent; and that the placement rate for child neglect was higher than for abuse, indicating that neglect is a more intractable problem. (PHR)

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SUMMARY REPORT

ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND

LATER SOCIALLY DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

March, 1978

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PREFACE

The New York State Assembly Select Committee on Child Abuse was established in 1969 by then Assembly Speaker Perry B. Duryea. It was the first, and remains perhaps the only, legislative committee devoted solely to the issues of child abuse and neglect. The mission of the Select Committee was to determine whether the existing child protective system was suffering from administrative problems, inadequate legislation, or both.

In the course of its work, the Select Committee held several series of hearings throughout the state over a three year period. These hearings covered all aspects of the child protective system and the problems of child abuse and neglect. Many ideas were expressed and many perceptions were conveyed to the committee. A number of witnesses directed the committee's attention to an examination of the social costs and consequences of child maltreatment. It was generally felt that these long-term consequences were ignored in the formulation of public policy and treatment programs--not deliberately but out of ignorance.

This testimony emphasized that many professionals had observed that abused and neglected children often grow up to become problem children who returned to the care and attention of societal institutions as delinquent and ungovernable juveniles. Judge George Follett from the Family Court in rural

St. Lawrence County reported that judges "witness countless cases involving juvenile misbehavior where an evaluation of the family history reveals gross parental inadequacy." Dr. Shervert Frazier, then Deputy Director of the Columbia University Psychiatric Institute, spoke of his study of murderers who had all been "the victims of remorseless physical brutality when they were children." Judge Nanette Dembitz from the New York City Family Court summed up this line of testimony: "the root of crime in the streets is the neglect of children."

The Select Committee undertook this study with a grant from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services because its policy implications were of genuine legislative concern, and also because the Select Committee had access to the records of agencies and courts which would be needed for such a study. The biggest obstacle to this type of longitudinal study is finding and obtaining access to relevant records. Though most courts and agencies were very helpful and cooperative, the legislative authority of the Select Committee guaranteed that the committee could perform the study. This report presents the basic findings of the study. Given the amount of information collected and the number of variables in it, the range of possible analysis is great. Additional detailed analysis is being conducted by Richard Gelles and Andrea Carr at the University of Rhode Island and will be reported on at a later date.

The absence of documented evidence on the long-term social consequences of child maltreatment has limited severely the ability of planners to design effective treatment programs for children and juveniles. Social policy is not usually based on unverified observations and beliefs, no matter how accurate they may be. Knowledge must be demonstrated convincingly before it can be acted upon. This report offers evidence that there is a definite relationship between child maltreatment and juvenile misbehavior and criminality. It does not attempt to prove that child maltreatment causes juvenile delinquency, or that every abused or neglected child will become a delinquent. It does show that maltreated children have a significantly greater liklihood of becoming delinquent or ungovernable. Though the data is conservative, the rate of juvenile delinquency among families in which abuse or neglect have occurred is considerably higher than among the general population of children living in the same communities.

To be useful, this report must be the beginning, not the end, of a process of finding the most effective arrangement of our social institutions meant to help children and families in trouble.

Hon. Christopher Mega
Chairman

INTRODUCTION

Methodology

The study is based on official records of child protective agencies and courts--on officially recorded reports of suspected child abuse or neglect and alleged juvenile delinquency and ungovernability. Children and families were not sought out or interviewed. The study examines, from the perspective of official records, children and families who were known to the child protective system or the court end of the juvenile justice system.

This is not an experimental research study made under the controlled conditions possible in a laboratory. It is, instead, an empirical study based on the official records of courts and agencies. These records are used as the basis for a longitudinal examination of children who were in families reported for child abuse or neglect and children who were reported as delinquent or ungovernable. It was not possible to devise a pure "control group" against which to make comparisons. It was not possible to construct a sample of "normal" or "average" children from the general population because every group of children or families that might be studied have been identified for a particular problem or reason. The fact that they are available to be put into a control group means that they do not share the anonymity--the unlabelled status--of children and families who have not gotten into trouble, who have not been referred to an agency or court for one reason or another. Constructing a

birth cohort, the only true control group possible, was beyond the scope and funding of this study.

The study was conducted in eight counties of New York State: Broome, Erie, Kings, Monroe, New York, St. Lawrence, Suffolk and Westchester. Most of the contacts included in the study were between 1950 and 1972, though some go as far back as 1930.

1950's Sample

Two different groups, or populations, of children were studied. The first group consisted of 5136 children from 1423 families which were reported to child protective agencies or the Children's Court for suspected child abuse or neglect in 1952 or 1953. Not all of the children in this group were involved in the child protective contact during the sample year. Some were never involved in such a contact but were included as siblings of the children who were. 4,465 of these children did have contact with at least one agency or court for child abuse or neglect or juvenile delinquency or ungovernability.

The histories of all of these children were traced through the records of the Family Court, or its predecessor Children's Court, for later juvenile delinquency or ungovernability cases; Court contacts for abuse or neglect were also recorded. All the juvenile contacts involved situations that were considered serious enough to take the child to court.

1970's Sample

The second group or population of children studied consists of 1,963 children who were reported to the Family Court or Probation Intake Service as delinquent or ungovernable (PINS) in 1971 or 1972. They were identified from the records of the court and intake. The histories of the children in this group were traced backwards for prior involvement in child abuse or neglect cases. In the second group, information was not collected on siblings, in part because the records of juvenile cases, unlike protective records, do not always include information on brothers and sisters. The data in this group was kept separate from the data on the first group of children and families, though a few group by group comparisons were made to examine possible differences and changes in the handling of cases.

FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings of this study confirm that there is an empirical relationship between child abuse or neglect and juvenile delinquency or ungovernability. It must be emphasized, and understood, that the findings presented in this report are conservative and underestimate the relationship between child maltreatment and juvenile misconduct for a number of reasons. Most of these reasons are related to the fact that the study is based on official records.

One significant conservative factor is the destruction of official records. If information is not preserved, it cannot show up in a study such as this one. In three of the counties--Broome, Suffolk, and Westchester--sizeable segments of the official records on child maltreatment or juvenile offenses were destroyed or lost through design or happenstance. This is a fact of life which researchers must live with and consider in interpreting the results of data that can be collected.

Another consequence of having to rely on official records is that the findings are made conservative by the under-reporting of child abuse and neglect. Child protective professionals universally acknowledge that even today, despite publicity, reporting laws, and elaborate child protective systems, child

maltreatment is not being reported nearly to the extent it occurs. Until the development of reporting laws and specialized child protective services, many situations of child abuse or neglect were not reported, or if they were, they were not called child maltreatment or protective cases but were hidden in referrals based on a generalized need for services. All of the protective contacts in this study, in both samples, occurred before the recent wave of professional and public concern about maltreated children. During the time of the study, under-reporting was even greater than it is now.

Being based only on official records of child protective agencies and the courts introduces another conservative factor in the study. To show a relationship between child maltreatment and later juvenile misconduct, a child must be officially reported to two different systems--the child protective and then the juvenile justice systems.

That the contacts for juvenile delinquency or ungovernability (PINS) were limited to the Children's or Family courts and its Probation Intake Service is another important conservative factor in the study. The 1970's sample includes contacts with the Probation Intake Service of the Family Court, but the 1950's sample does not because the records of these "unofficial" cases were not preserved. But many children who are delinquent or ungovernable are never referred to court. The bulk of the possible contacts with the juvenile justice system, which do not result in a referral to court, were excluded from the study.

Another noteworthy conservative factor in the study is the migration of families in and out of the counties studied during the period of the study, 1950 to 1972. This migration limits the relationship that can be found between child abuse or neglect and juvenile delinquency or ungovernability. Children who were reported as delinquent or ungovernable may have been living elsewhere when they were abused or neglected, and other abused or neglected children may have moved out of the county before becoming involved in delinquent or ungovernable behavior.

One additional factor understates even the possible relationship between child maltreatment and juvenile misconduct that the study can portray. Children could be charged with delinquent behavior only between their seventh and sixteenth birthdays, and with ungovernable behavior from their seventh to eighteenth birthdays. In practice, the active age range for delinquency is ten to sixteen, and for ungovernability it was, until recently, seven to eighteen; thus, the period of most juvenile misconduct is limited to about six years. This means that some children in the study were never "eligible" to be charged with delinquent or ungovernability during the period studied, while most of the others were "eligible" for only part of that period. For example, a sibling who was over sixteen at the time of the sample year contact could not be charged with a juvenile offense. Or, a child who was included because of a maltreatment contact when he was two could not possibly have been charged with delinquency for another five or nine years.

Similarly, the "eligibility" of the children in the study is limited by the number of officially recorded contacts included in the study. The number of contacts for each child varies greatly, ranging from none to twenty-two contacts. Only considering the first contact, already 11% of the children were not available by the sample to have a later delinquent or ungovernable contact, and only 37% of the children with one contact were old enough to be charged with delinquency or ungovernability. By the second contact, almost half the children are no longer available for a juvenile contact because they did not have three or more contacts, and almost half of those who are available were too old to be charged with delinquency or ungovernability.

These are the limiting contexts in which the data in this study had to be collected and analyszed. The findings in this study are conservative and underestimate the relationship or association between officially reported child maltreatment and later officially reported juvenile delinquency or ungovernability. The interrelationships described in this report are all minimal, bed-rock figures. Bare and uninflated, they are persuasive because they are conservative.

Finding No. 1

As Many As 50% of the Families Reported For Child Abuse or Neglect Had At Least One Child Who Was Later Taken To Court As Delinquent or Ungovernable

Forty-two percent of the families with at least one founded contact had one or more children who were taken to court as delinquent or ungovernable. In the five counties with relatively complete records, 49% of the families had such a child. In the county with the most complete set of records, Monroe county, 64% of the families were in this situation.

This finding implies that families reported for child abuse or neglect account for a disproportionate number of delinquent and ungovernable children. Only a minute fraction of the families in the counties under study were reported for child abuse or neglect in the 1950's sample. Yet, in the counties with complete records, about half of these families produced at least one child who was taken to court as delinquent or ungovernable. It is doubtful that any other possible group of families experiences such a high rate of delinquency--except a group comprised of delinquent children.

Finding No. 2

In Monroe County, the Rate of Juvenile Delinquency and Ungovernability Among the Children Reported as Abused or Neglected Was 5 Times Greater Than Among the General Population

In Monroe County, it was possible to compare the rate of juvenile delinquency and ungovernability of the children in the 1950's sample with the children living in the county as a whole. The rate of delinquency-ungovernability of all children between the ages of 10 and 16 in Monroe County between the years 1957 and 1967 was 2%. At the same time, the rate of delinquency or ungovernability for the children in the sample averaged almost 10%--five times greater. It should be remembered that the 1950's Monroe County sample alone was substantial--almost 600 children. This is the most convincing proof possible that there is a definite relationship between child maltreatment and later juvenile delinquency and ungovernability.

It is important to note that the socio-economic background of the children in the 1950's sample of reported abuse and neglect cases and the general population of children reported to the court as delinquent or ungovernable is comparable. It is generally believed that many, if not most, of the families reported for suspected child abuse or neglect are from the lower socio-economic

strata of our society. Other studies have shown that many children taken to court as delinquent or ungovernable are also from the lower socio-economic strata of our society. It seems clear that families reported to child protective agencies and families that produce delinquent or ungovernable juveniles are weighted toward the lower socio-economic levels of our society. This does not mean that all abused or neglected children, and all delinquent or ungovernable juveniles, come from impoverished or low income families. The socio-economic factors that are said to affect the reporting of child maltreatment also seem to affect the reporting of juvenile misconduct. Both the child protective and the juvenile justice systems operate under similar constraints and generally serve the same population of children and families.

Finding No. 3

In High Contact Counties, 25% of the Boys and 17% of the Girls With at Least One Founded Child Maltreatment Contact in the Early 1950's Were Later Reported to a Court as Delinquent or Ungovernable

In high contact counties of the 1950's sample, 25% of the boys and 17% of the girls with at least one founded, maltreatment contact were later taken to court as delinquent or ungovernable juveniles. 3.4% of the boys and 1.9% of the girls were siblings of children who had been reported as abused or neglected but who had never been part of a child protective report. In

Monroe County, the county with the most complete set of records, 32% of the boys and 24% of the girls were later reported as delinquent or ungovernable.

It should be noted that these figures, like the ones in Finding No. 2, are very conservative--they are gross statistics without regard to the limiting factors described in the introduction to the Findings Section of this report. Richard Gelles and Andrea Carr at the University of Rhode Island report that sophisticated statistical analysis indicates that as many as 50% of the children may have had later delinquency or ungovernability contacts.

Though the 1950's sample is almost evenly divided between boys and girls--51% boys and 49% girls--a much greater percentage of the boys were later reported to the Family Court as delinquent. This difference between boys and girls reflects the fact that considerably more boys than girls are charged with, and probably commit, delinquent acts.

Finding No. 4

In Three Counties, 35% of the Boys and 44% of the Girls Reported to a Court as Delinquent or Ungovernable in the Early 1970's Had Been Reported Previously as Abused or Neglected

Children who are reported as abused or neglected are a very small percentage of the population. Yet, the study of juveniles reported as delinquent or ungovernable in the early 1970's shows that 21% of the boys and 29% of the girls had been reported, when younger, as abused or neglected children.

In three contact counties, this relationship is much greater, averaging 35% for the boys and 44% for the girls. In Erie county, 41% of the boys and 36% of the girls had earlier contact with the child protective system; in Monroe county, 36% of the boys and 53% of the girls had such an earlier contact. In New York county, 31% of the boys and 45% of the girls had an earlier abuse or neglect contact. Thus, the small percentage of children who are reported as abused or neglected account for a significant part of the juvenile delinquency and ungovernability caseloads in the Family Courts of these communities.

The relationship figures for the 1970's sample varies from county to county much more than it did in the 1950's sample, and this variation does not coincide with the degree to which records had been preserved in the county or the population increased or decreased. For example, Kings County differs markedly from the other three large high contact counties. The association between child maltreatment and juvenile misconduct is only about one third that of these other similar counties. The enormous change in the population of Kings county may account for this.

Finding No. 5

Delinquent Children Who Were Reported As Abused Or Neglected Tend to be More Violent Than Other Delinquents

When the delinquency contacts in the 1970's sample are associated with prior abuse or neglect contacts, there is a greater association between violent delinquent acts and prior child maltreatment than non-violent delinquent acts and prior child maltreatment. The sample of some of these contacts is small, but not for most, and together, a clear pattern emerges.

Homicide was less than two-tenths of a percent of all the delinquency contacts in the 1970's sample; yet, 29% of these homicide contacts were related to prior abuse or neglect contacts. Arson was slightly more than one percent of the delinquency contacts, but 24% of them were related to prior maltreatment contacts. Rape was less than five tenths of a percent of the delinquency contacts, but 29% of them were related to earlier maltreatment contacts. Assault was 12% of the delinquency referral reasons, but 22% of them were associated with earlier child maltreatment reports. Disorderly conduct--fighting--was slightly less than 4% of the delinquency contacts, but over 21% were related to prior abuse or neglect contacts. Possession of a dangerous weapon accounted for 2% of the delinquency referral reasons, but almost 20% were related to earlier maltreatment cases.

Except for unauthorized use of autos and possession of burglar's tools, the correlation between delinquent referral reasons in the 1970's sample and earlier reports of child abuse or neglect drops consistently in the non-violent categories.

All of this implies that delinquent children who were involved in child abuse or neglect contacts are somewhat different from delinquent children who were not reported as abused or neglected. They are "over-represented" among the group of juveniles who commit, or are charged with committing, violent acts.

Finding No. 6

Child Maltreatment Cannot Be Used As An Indicator Or Predicator Of A Particular Type Of Juvenile Misbehavior

Though the study of the 1950's sample confirms that there is a relationship between child abuse or neglect and juvenile delinquency or ungovernability, it also indicates that almost any type of child maltreatment can lead to any type of later behavioral problems with no clear pattern of predictability. Not every child reported as abused or neglected was later reported as delinquent or ungovernable. A childhood with maltreatment may predispose a child towards later delinquency or ungovernability more than a childhood without abuse or neglect, but other

factors apparently help direct this predisposition toward a specific type of delinquency or ungovernability.

This limitation on constructing a formula of predictability should be remembered by anyone tempted to use child maltreatment as a predictor of specific juvenile criminality. Making predictions about the type of anti-social behavior to be expected of abused and neglected children is extremely risky--as are all behavioral predictions. Apparently, the experience of being abused or neglected as a child is more important and consequential than the type of maltreatment suffered.

This lack of sure predictability, in itself, is an important finding because of its implications for treatment. It means that no type of child maltreatment can be given less priority than another in long-range planning for the treatment of children and parents. Priorities are often set in the investigative stage because of the apparent, immediate danger to a child, but these priorities must end when treatment services are provided. Every abused and neglected child is in equal need of treatment services, and the potential social costs of ignoring any of these needs is equally great.

Finding No. 7

Few Services Were Provided To Abused and Neglected Children or Their Families

Professionals who treat abused and neglected children, or their families, recommend a wide range of rehabilitative services to help families overcome the problems that lead to child maltreatment; in most cases, child abuse or neglect are found to be symptoms of other problems, not isolated problems in themselves.

Yet, an analysis of the dispositions of the abuse and neglect contacts in the 1950's sample shows that the gulf between the treatment ideal and its implementation of it was enormous. Perhaps the most outstanding, if not shocking, finding of this study is the absolute paucity of services provided to children and families, even though 78% of the contacts were founded. Less than 7% of all the child protective contacts in the 1950's sample led to the provision of any services, and the chief service offered was casework supervision. Fewer than .1% of the contacts resulted in the provision of any other type of service.

In the 1970's sample, the provision of services in child protective cases was also extremely low. 12% of these protective contacts led to supervision of the parents, and 1.2% led to the provision of some other type of service also.

More recent data on the provision of child protective services indicates that current cases of suspected child abuse or neglect are not faring much better today in the receipt of needed services. Statistics released by the State Department of Social Services show that the traditional reliance on casework supervision and placement as the prime protective service response is still very much alive. Casework supervision accounts for 44% of the services provided, and placement accounts for another 22%.

The lack of services has an important bearing on the other findings of this study. It means that little, if anything, was attempted to undo the effects of abuse or neglect on the children, and that little, if anything, was done to alter the home environment in which the children lived. Thus, for most of the children and families in the 1950's sample, the child protective intervention had little impact on their lives, and the same can be said of the children in the 1970's sample who had been reported as abused or neglected earlier in their lives. It would seem that protective services is generally limited to stopping a recurrence of abuse or neglect, and that even these efforts do not conform to the state-of-the-art knowledge of the time.

Finding No. 8

Most of the Founded Child Protective Contacts Ended in No Action

62% of the contacts led to no further action. The high rate of "no further action" is not a sign that the contacts were inaccurate or false reports. 79% of the protective contacts were founded. Yet, 69% of the child protective contacts in the 1950's sample resulted in no change in the child's status--the child remained in the same home without any services being provided. Another 6.9% of the contacts resulted in supervision or services for the family whose child remained in the home. Thus, in the 1950's sample, about 75% of the child protective contacts led to no change in the child's status, and little, if any, change in his circumstances.

In the 1970's sample of children reported as delinquent or ungovernable, the disposition of the child protective contacts shows a similar pattern as in the 1950's sample. 61.3% of these protective contacts led to the child remaining in his own home.

Finding No. 9

The Placement Rate In Child Neglect Cases Was Higher Than In Child Abuse Cases, Indicating That Neglect Is a More Intractable Problem

Abuse is usually considered more serious than neglect. But the percentage of neglect contacts leading to placement was higher than the percentage of abuse contacts leading to placement. 16% of the abuse contacts resulted in placement, but 20.3% of the neglect contacts ended in placement.

A five percent difference seems small, but it is a 20% variation among all the child protective placements recorded in the study. This finding indicates that neglect may be more difficult to treat than abuse, that protective agencies find abuse more amenable to treatment. As the major study on child neglect indicates, neglect "is chronic, pervasive, resistant to specific treatment, and transmitted in intergenerational cycles."*

Moreover, it has been suggested that neglect may have a higher social cost than abuse. A study comparing the family characteristics associated with abuse, neglect, ungovernability, and delinquency found similar patterns of family dysfunction in both abuse and ungovernability cases, while the dysfunction in neglect and delinquency cases were also similar to each other.

*Profile of Neglect: A Survey of the State of Knowledge of Child Neglect, Polansky, Hally, and Polansky, U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, Social and Rehabilitation Service 1975.

The patterns were more similar between abuse and ungovernability, or neglect and delinquency, than between abuse and neglect or ungovernability and delinquency.

This finding is yet another reminder that both abuse and neglect are equally serious and require an equal treatment commitment from professionals and communities.

Finding No. 10

The Placement Rate For Ungovernability Was Higher Than For Juvenile Delinquency, Indicating that Ungovernability Is A More Intractable Problem

In the 1970's sample, the placement rate for ungovernability was almost twice the rate for delinquency. 19.4% of the ungovernability contacts led to placement, while only 11.3% of the delinquency contacts led to a similar placement. The placement rates for ungovernability were also much higher than for delinquency in the 1950's sample--about one third greater. Delinquency is usually considered a more serious offense than ungovernability--it is, after all, criminal activity of juveniles. Yet, a substantially higher percentage of ungovernable children were placed as a result of their contact with the Family Court. The explanation is, probably, that ungovernable children are "beyond the lawful" control of their parents, who may also not want them, and thus placement becomes the only alternative for them.

Finding No. 11

Children Reported As Abused or Neglected and Children Reported As Delinquent or Ungovernable Come From Similar Families, Which Are Significantly Different From the General Population

The families in both the 1950's and 1970's samples, which were identified for different reasons, share certain basic characteristics in common, which distinguish them markedly from most families living in the same communities. In general, these families were larger, had a greater percentage of illegitimate children, and were "one parent" households with either parent missing. Families belonging to minority groups appear to be "over-represented," even though almost 60% of the 1950's sample were white children.

The demographic data on the children and families in both samples give a picture of dysfunctional, multi-problem families which probably did not fit easily into the normal life of their communities. Regardless of the reported child maltreatment or juvenile misbehavior many of them could have otherwise been considered families in trouble--children and parents who needed help to overcome a variety of problems.

The families in both samples were larger than the average. According to the 1950 Census, only 12% of all American families

with children had four or more children, but 42% of the families in the 1950's sample were at least that large--almost three and a half times greater than the national average. According to the 1970 Census, only 16% of the families in New York state had four or more children, but 53% of the families in the 1970's sample were at least that large. In the 1970's sample, 10% of the families had eight or more children, while only 2.5% of the families in the United States were so large.

The greatest difference between the families in both samples and the general population is in the large percentage of children born out-of-wedlock. In the 1950's sample, the rate of illegitimate births is 450% higher than the national average, and in the 1970's sample it is 261% greater. 18% of the children in the 1950's sample were born out-of-wedlock, while the national average was 4% from 1940 until 1955. 13% of the children in the 1970's sample were born out-of-wedlock, while the national average from 1955 to 1960 was 4.9%.

Large families, of course, in themselves are not harmful, even though the trend, or fashion, recently has been towards small ones; they may even be healthier than one child families. Moreover, many people believe that the stigma of "illegitimacy" is more harmful than the simple fact in itself. But these situations can be a sign of trouble when they occur in conjunction with other events. The data from both samples, though especially the 1950's sample, shows that a large percentage

of the families were missing one parent. In the 1950's sample, 40% of the children did not have a father living with them, and 15% did not have a mother living with them. The data on the 1970's sample is less conclusive because it was not known for about 40% of the children; where available, the data indicates that 28% of the children came from a home without a father, while 7% had no mother living with them. The combination of large families, illegitimate births--which often means different fathers for each of the children--and one parent families has important consequences for parents and children, as well as the community in which they live.

We have become more conscious of racial and ethnic influences and discrimination than ever before in our history, and we are more willing to attribute motivations to these differences. There is a temptation to do so with the data in this study. Though 58% of the 1950's sample, in which ethnicity is known, is white, 21% of the children are black and 6% were Hispanic, at a time when non-whites accounted for only 6.5% of the population of the state. In the 1970's sample in which 39% of the children were white, 31% were black and 12% were Hispanic when only 13% of the population was non-white.

Thus, one could easily say that non-whites are "over-represented" in both the 1950's and the 1970's samples. This would mean that non-whites were "over-represented" in the reports of suspected child abuse and neglect in the early 1950's

and reports of alleged delinquency and ungovernability in the early 1970's. The possible significance of this apparent fact is difficult to assess, given the high proportion of large, broken, one parent families in both studies. It is very possible that these problems had more to do with the situations that led to the children being reported as abused, neglected, ungovernable, or delinquent than any other characteristic of their families, including race. It is also possible that the non-white families in the counties studied had a higher incidence of such family dysfunction; "over-representation" cannot be claimed unless these factors are known.

Saying that a group is "over-represented" sounds like an important discovery--it even sounds like an accusation. But it only means something when the true level of incidence of a problem like child abuse or juvenile delinquency within that group is known--not the level of reporting, but the true level of incidence. A group can only be "over-represented" if it is being reported out of proportion to the incidence within it. Even if it is being reported frequently, and out of proportion to its size in the general population, it is not being "over-represented" in reporting if the level of incidence within it is correspondingly high. Of course, knowing the true level of incidence of a social problem within each group in our society is not within the grasp of our knowledge and data gathering techniques. The true level of incidence of child

abuse, for example, is not even known, though it is debated, for the entire society, let alone a segment of that society.

Much has been said in the debate about the role of poverty in child abuse and neglect situations that are reported to protective agencies and the courts. Despite the importance often attached to these arguments, the official records of child maltreatment and juvenile offense cases generally did not include information about the economic status of the child's family. Apparently, the socio-economic status of children and families is not considered important enough to be recorded in these records, and, one must assume, to be considered in devising treatment plans. It should be noted, however, that whatever the merits of this debate, most impoverished families do not abuse and neglect their children or produce juvenile delinquents. It is unfair to the many impoverished but devoted parents in our society to assume that they are not successful parents. They are just as loving and successful as any other parents in our society.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study confirm that there is an empirical relationship between child abuse or neglect and later socially deviant behavior. It is not clear whether it is possible to prove that child abuse or neglect causes juvenile delinquency or ungovernability. Not all maltreated children become behavior problems as juveniles, and not all delinquent or ungovernable children were abused or neglected when younger. Moreover, in most systems of logic, attributing causation to temporal sequence is a fallacy.

One fact is resoundingly clear: a considerable percentage of children, as seen in both the 1950's and the 1970's sample, were abused or neglected and reported as delinquent or ungovernable when they were older. An important implication of this study is that the relationship between child abuse or neglect and later socially deviant behavior is more complicated than a simple cause and effect association, and that this complexity raises many questions about how we are responding to the problems of child maltreatment, juvenile crime, and family dysfunction.

An important factor in the relationship between child maltreatment and juvenile misbehavior, highlighted in this study, is the amazing lack of services provided to most children and families. Though human behavior is difficult to change, and

undoing the emotional consequences of child maltreatment may be even more difficult and unappealing, little effort was made to even try to help children and parents. Except for families involved in special or experimental programs, which can reach only a small fraction of the child protective caseload, there is no reason to suppose that things are any better now than during the time under study. The complaint that we have improved reporting laws but few services are available to respond to new cases is almost universal.

In both samples in the study, the prime services provided, if they are to be called that, were either placement or case-work supervision, and for most cases, nothing else. It is possible, of course, that the families involved needed nothing else, but the outcome in terms of the later problems of many of the children indicates that more was needed, unless the children and parents are going to be discarded as hopeless. The criticism that child protective services does not do much for the child--that it is oriented towards helping the parents--is not a novel perception, but it is true. Most services, most child protective efforts, are directed towards getting the parents to stop the abuse or neglect. Little is done to help the child overcome the experience of being abused or neglected. Abused and neglected children need mental health services to undo the emotional damage of child maltreatment. There does not seem to be any doubt that child abuse

and child neglect evoke aggressive feelings in children, which are either directed inward or outward. Yet, not many abused or neglected children receive mental health services, despite evidence that they are effective.

Psychotherapy alone, of course, is not enough. As the data from both the 1950's and 1970's samples indicate, the families from which both abused or neglected and delinquent or ungovernable children come tend to suffer from a range of other problems. Though the study does not prove that child abuse causes juvenile delinquency, it leads to an even more important conclusion: child maltreatment and juvenile misconduct are products of a common family environment. They are shared symptoms of the deeper problems afflicting families and children.

The demographic data on the families in both the 1950's and 1970's sample, graphically depict the inordinate dimensions of the family breakdown experienced by children reported as abused, neglected, ungovernable, or delinquent. Services and treatment approaches must be oriented towards the family as a whole. But in the system we have today, the family is not treated as a unit; instead services are offered piecemeal for a specific individual or a specific problem. Unrealistic distinctions have to be made to fit a family into a categorical program whose area of expertise or jurisdiction often conform to legislative or administrative mandates instead of the true needs of children and parents.

The label or category assigned to a child appears to be more an accident of time and place than of any condition or behavior inherent in the child or family. Over the years, children are pushed through various systems with changing labels. The terms "abused child," "neglected child," "juvenile delinquent," or "ungovernable youth" frequently describe the same child or juvenile--or his brother or sister--during different stages of his early life.

These categories and distinctions were created by a system of categorical funding, usually initiated at the Federal level, and then duplicated at the local and state level to qualify for the Federal funds that become available. Over the years, an enormous hodge-podge of programs has been established to deal with various problems, or parts of problems. Every time a new problem is discerned, another program is created and funded without any reference to other programs that already exist; each new program became another lump on the pile. The time has come to undertake the monumental task of examining the entire system of categorical programs in order to realign them with reality. This is not a task to be undertaken lightly, and it will upset established or vested interests who will fear the uncertainty of change. But it is necessary if children, parents, and families are going to be served and helped. If our goal is to help, this necessary re-examination cannot be postponed or ignored.

Services cost money, and that is another important obstacle to overcome. There is no indication from this study that short-term miracle cures will do. As another study noted: "clinical experience has already shown us that many abused children and their families need help years after the initial identification." Many of the families in the study required intensive, long-term help--perhaps for a generation or more. In one sense, they got it in the form of repeated but intermittent involvements with the child protective or juvenile justice systems as individual problems were brought to the attention of agencies and courts. But there was no long-term commitment to supporting families with an organized array of services to help them overcome their problems. We must face the fact that some families will require this kind of help for a long period of time.

Enough is known to reshape the systems we have developed to help families and children in trouble. The child protective system in many communities has been recently upgraded and given new stature, while the juvenile justice system has often turned out to be a disappointment to those who worked so hard to establish it. All of the disparate systems that affect children and parents must be re-examined and redirected to deal with the total reality of the problems that afflict families, children, and parents.

A study such as this one, of course, raises more questions than it answers, and it cannot give us a blueprint for what must be done. It can clarify our thinking and point out the choices that face us. It can tell us that the consequences of child maltreatment are more serious than we would probably like to imagine--that if we do not help children in trouble, they will grow up to make trouble. Child abuse and neglect are not isolated problems unrelated to the life of families and our society; the comforting thought that they afflict only someone else is an illusion that must be discarded. The effort to help maltreated children, in the end, unites the forces of compassion and common sense in our society. Yet, though the study points out the direction that lies ahead, it cannot compel us to begin the journey. That is something that we, as a society, must decide, and this study gives us some verified facts to help us decide. The task ahead is the responsibility of both professionals and the public; without their mutual support, its achievement will not be possible.